

# [Is OpenStack a cloud? Thoughts on Subbu Allamaraju's post](#)

As you may have seen from Tweets floating around today, there was an interesting post written by Subbu Allamaraju, Chief Engineer for the cloud program at eBay, titled "OpenStack is not cloud" - <http://www.subbu.org/blog/2013/07/openstack-is-not-cloud>

This article brings up some very interesting questions about how we define the litmus test for a cloud, and how OpenStack is measured against these criteria.

## **AWS is a cloud**

This is a true statement. We use AWS as a benchmark for most other public cloud offerings mostly. The AWS ecosystem has grown and matured over the years to be a fully-featured environment which has expanded to cover every component of the \*aaS model.

If we think about how AWS came to be, it is not unlike what OpenStack is, but just a few years older. AWS grew out of the internal infrastructure that Amazon used to provision to its own organization. The choice came to bring the product to the public in 2004, and with the launch of the SQS (Simple Queue Service) the first AWS public offering was in production.

## **OpenStack 2013 is AWS 2006**

Recall that AWS is now nearly 10 years in existence, so is it really proper for us to measure OpenStack, a 3 year old product, against AWS in its current form? I think that we need to make sure that we measure the current OpenStack release (Grizzly) against the 2006 version of AWS to really get a sense of the comparison.

Also, remember that AWS has different origins. AWS is a walled garden in a sense because we (community developers) do not contribute to the product. It is, and only will be developed by Amazon, and we are consumers of the service in the same way that I don't know how my shirt was sewn, but I know I can go to any American Eagle store and pick one up.

## **Comparing Apples to Apple Sauce**

If we compare AWS to OpenStack, it really isn't a fair comparison in a lot of ways. We (you and I as consumers) don't build AWS. We consume AWS. The key difference is that for us to adopt OpenStack, we are building the infrastructure ourselves. For me to use AWS, it is already prepared. In effect, it is the apple sauce. The product has already been processed for consumption.

When I am deploying OpenStack, I am picking apples. The community has built the tree, and I consume the product at that layer. I then take the apples and prepare the product, or in this case the cloud, and build my solution to present to my consumer.

Is there a lot of work there? Yes. Is there a well documented upgrade path to the next revision of OpenStack? No. Was there for the internal AWS team in 2006? Great question. This is why this is an important discussion, and why we need to see what OpenStack is meant to deliver, and what they deliver today. As mentioned in the article, there are clearly some services that are needed in OpenStack in its current form to make it more effective.

## **Rackspace is cloud**

Subbu summed things up very well, and I agree with a lot of the detail that he posted. But I think the article could really be titled “OpenStack is not cloud. Rackspace is cloud”. The only true comparison to AWS in relation to what drives is to view Rackspace as the consumable product built on OpenStack.

We will look towards Eucalyptus to bring the private cloud comparison, but again this is a difficult A/B test because there are clear and fundamental differences to what is being brought to the table by OpenStack versus what Eucalyptus is doing with AWS compatibility.

## **Thank you Subbu!**

At risk of sounding wishy-washy, I have to say that I both agree with Subbu’s post, and disagree at the same time. In spirit, he highlights some of the shortcomings of what OpenStack is when we install it ourselves for public or private cloud deployments. But we have to view all of the factors that draw us to those conclusions.

OpenStack is a positive disruption at the very least. The potential is great, and although it won’t be the “AWS killer”, nothing else will either. That being said, I encourage you to give it a try, and grow along with it as OpenStack matures. Remember that the Havana release is coming in the fall, and along with it some significant growth in the service offering.

Thanks to Subbu for sparking some great conversation, and I look forward to seeing how this all goes in the coming months!